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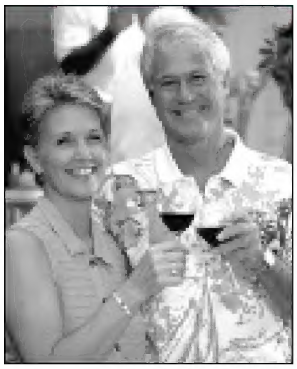
LAFAYETTE VISTAS



What's For Dinner?

(Not to Mention Breakfast & Lunch)

Reveling in Lafayette's Restaurant Row

Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity. – Voltaire

We're eating out more often. Americans now spend 46 percent of their food dollars away from home, compared to 25 percent in 1955, and the figure is expected to climb to 53 percent by 2010. Where eating out used to be a luxury, it is now standard practice for so many busy families, who have to sandwich nourishment between work, carpool dates, soccer games, volunteer time, music lessons, playdates, and okay, American Idol.

Restaurants do more than feed us; indeed, they often serve as that third place beyond work and home where we gather with family and friends to socialize, entertain and relax. Restaurants can nourish the soul as well as the body.

Luckily for us, Lafayette has grown into something of a culinary micro-mecca, with more than two dozen restaurants now offering a variety of choices ranging from haute cuisine to ethnic delicacies to family-oriented fare.

Each year, the *San Francisco Chronicle* publishes its list of the Top 100 Restaurants in the Bay Area and it invariably includes such icons as Chez Panisse in Berkeley and the French Laundry in Yountville. Contra Costa County hasn't always been distinguished by it's food purveyors, but lately it has broken through, and the *Chronicle's* list now includes four restaurants on this side of the Caldecott Tunnel.

Perhaps surprisingly, three of those four are right here in Lafayette: Bo's Barbecue, Chow and Pizza Antica.

Lafayette's restaurants have won other accolades, too, including a *Chronicle Bargain Bites Award* (Casa Gourmet Burrito), *Sunset Magazine's Best Barbeque in the West* (Bo's Barbeque), *Diablo Magazine's Best Brunch* (Duck Club), and *Best of the East Bay Five Time Winner* (Amarin Thai). Two of Lafayette's restaurants were also recently named among the Top 10 Resturants in the East Bay for Kids by *Diablo Magazine* (Chow and Uncle Yu's).

So, while restaurateurs of Berkeley's Gourmet Ghetto may not yet worry, Lafayette's affluent demographics, easy parking, pleasant climate, and small town feel are drawing strikingly good restaurants to Mt. Diablo Blvd...and the customers are following. And they're spending. Recent data collected by the City suggests that diners spent $50 million in Lafayette' restaurants last year.

More than just fun and convenient, eating out is also good for our City coffers. In fact, 21 percent of the city's sales tax comes from restaurants – that's half a million dollars in revenue that pays for police, public works, parks and other city services. What a terrific reason for you and your family to eat out more often! And invite your friends: the City gladly accepts sales tax from non-Lafayette residents, too!

To (re)introduce you to Lafayette's great restaurant scene, City staff scoured the Internet to see just how distinguished our eating establishments really are. On the following pages is a summary of what we found. Please excuse us if we left off your favorite – we included only non-chains that have recently been reviewed in local print publications or on the Internet.

Eat out more often: it's good for you and for your city, too!

Restaurant Row

Amarin Thai Cuisine
3555-B Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.8883

"A terrific and busy Thai restaurant with a whole lot of satisfied looking customers."
– *KTVU Channel 2*

Diablo Magazine **Best of the East Bay 5-time winner**

Bistro at the Lafayette Park Hotel
3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.7108

"Intimate, classy, cozy and plush . . . and they have food. Really good food."
– *Contra Costa Times*

"Noble bistro menu in a casual setting...exceptional burgers."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Blue Ginko
3518-A Mount Diablo Blvd. (in the Plaza Center)
925.962.9020

"The gyoza potstickers were among the best and most delicate I've encountered in recent years. Diners swooned over dragon rolls and Godzilla rolls."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Bo's Barbecue
3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.7133

"Bo's is an '***only in California***' rib shack. Where else would the meat be from renowned Niman Ranch, the bread – make that the baguette – be from Acme and the beverages include . . . wines from Arrowwood and PlumpJack?"
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

San Francisco Chronicle **Top 100 Bay Area Restaurant**

Sunset Magazine **Best Barbeque of the West**

Casa Gourmet Burrito
3322 Mount Diablo Blvd. • 925.284.4415.

"Burritos from many lands: spicy Thai, spicy curry, chicken and artichoke, garlic-lime steak, every kind of seafood from prawns to lobsters and the house special, which stuffs chicken and steak into the same tortilla."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

San Francisco Chronicle **Bargain Bites Restaurant**

Chow
53 Lafayette Circle • 925.962.2469

"Chow has pioneered a new category of restaurant, a place to enjoy a higher quality of food at low prices, all day and every day. (It is) in a class by itself."
– *Contra Costa Times*

San Francisco Chronicle **Top 100 Bay Area Restaurant**

Diablo Magazine's **Top 10 Best Restaurant for Kids**

The Duck Club Restaurant at the Lafayette Park Hotel
3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.7108

"100 Most Delicious Things to Eat: Irresistible pieces of tender lobster served with mizuna greens, juicy mango, and creamy avocado."
– *Diablo Magazine*

El Charro Mexican Dining
3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.2345

"I had a simply perfect quesadilla, a fluffy and light chile relleno and a green enchilada with spicy chicken and a green sauce. And the flautas. . . were crisp, delicious, (and) fast."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

El Jarro Mexican Cafe
3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.6639

"Hidden, unknown, but incredibly good upscale Oaxacan gourmet fare: small, everything cooked from scratch."
– *Contra Costa Times*

Giardino
3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.283.3869

"The capellini with pesto, sundried tomatoes, artichokes and goat cheese is bright on the tongue, and the pasta is perfectly cooked."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Great Wall Restaurant
3500 Golden Gate Way • 925.284.3500

"The Salt-n-Pepper Calamari and Won Ton Soup are favorites but the Chicken Lettuce Cups keep us coming back for more."
– *Yelp.com*

Joes of Lafayette
3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.299.8807

"The people are fun, the music is always great and so is the food — consistently good."
– *Yelp.com*

Kaffee Barbara
1005 Brown Ave. • 925.284.9390

"One of the loveliest places in Lafayette to dine al fresco. On sunny weekends, locals line up at the long-standing breakfast-lunch restaurant to get a spot on the multilevel terrace sheltered by vine-covered trellises."
– *East Bay Express*

Kane Sushi
3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.284.9709

Four forks. "A sushi bar with some of the richest, gooiest, most garish sushi rolls you'll ever taste."
– *Contra Costa Times*

La Finestra Ristorante
100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 101 • 925.284.5282

"A charming dining room, an efficient staff, an interesting menu and well-executed dishes (make) La Finestra. . . worth finding."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Lily's House
3555-A Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.284.7569

"Chef Willy Ying's creative touch gives Lily's House that little something extra that will make diners sit up and take notice."
– *Rossmoor News*

Mangia
975 Moraga Road • 925.284.3081

"All in all, the breezy upscale atmosphere, good pasta and pizza make Mangia a great choice for a casual night out."
– *Oakland Tribune*

Millie's Kitchen
1018 Oak Hill Road, #A • 925.283.2397

***Diablo Magazine's* Best Breakfast Restaurant in the East Bay**

Per Tutti
3576 Mt. Diablo Boulevard • 925.284.5225

"There's something refreshing about the clean simplicity of this Lafayette pasta place, with its big, streetside windows, and a scattering of umbrellaed tables along the broad sidewalk."
– *Diablo Magazine*

Petar's
32 Lafayette Circle • 925.284.7117

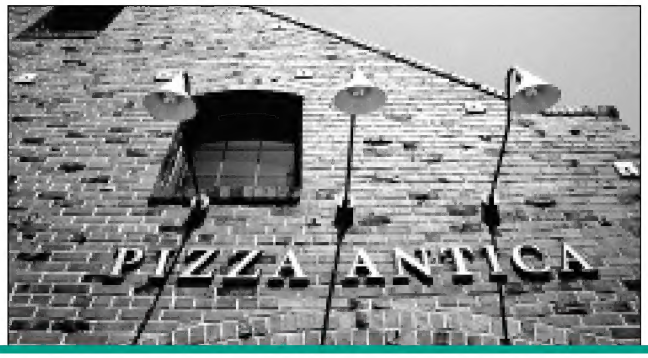
"The feeling is pure Tyrolean, with dark wood furniture and ceiling beams. . .and a dining room where you can settle on steak, salmon, or shrimp Louie."
– *Diablo Magazine*

Pizza Antica
3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.299.0500

"(The) menu is original and striking, remarkable for its rich, fat flavors and textures, the gnocchi, pastas and desserts all scrupulously housemade."
– *Contra Costa Times*

"Pizza crust is just strong enough to hold its toppings without caving in, yet doesn't overshadow their flavors."
– *East Bay Express*

***San Francisco Chronicle* Top 100 Bay Area Restaurant**



Postino
3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.299.8700

"Beautiful inside and out, innovative, upscale Italian dining."
– *Contra Costa Times*

"How can a house salad be so darn good? The mixed greens with shaved radishes, cucumbers, and a spunky herb vinaigrette make a simple starter a destination dish."
– *Diablo Magazine*

"Still the most romantic place to dine east of the Caldecott."
– *East Bay Express*

Squirrels Coffee Shop
998 Moraga Road (at Mt. Diablo Blvd) • 925.284.7830

"[The] hefty sausage sandwich is thoroughly Midwestern, pure Wisconsin bratwurst through and through. Not only that, but it may just be the best brat this side of Sheboygan."
– *Contra Costa Times*

Swad Indian Cuisine
3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.962.9575

"The best version of Aloo Gobi — a soft oniony saute of potato and cauliflower bathed in golden oil."
– *Contra Costa Times*

Susan Foord Catering & Chow Ciao
965 Mountain View Dr. • 925.299.7616

***Diablo Magazine's* Best for Take Out**

Taqueria El Balazo
3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.284.8700

"It's the epitome of San Francisco-style Mexican food: burritos dished cafeteria-style, with barrels of sweet and fruity aguas frescas waiting at the end of the line."
– *SF Weekly*

Uncle Yu's Szechuan
999 Oak Hill Road • 925.283.1688

"...the best Szechuan Chinese restaurant I have ever been to. Refined Chinese dining without pretense."
– *Contra Costa Times*

***Diablo Magazine's* Top 10 Best Restaurant for Kids *and* Best Chinese and Takeout Restaurant in the East Bay**

Villagio
960 Moraga Road • 925.284.5900

"Elegant Italian in a tiny, handsome dining room."
– *Contra Costa Times*

Vino
3531 Plaza Way (near the Park Theater) • 925.284.1330

"Fun, intimate restaurant with flavorful, health-conscious menu choices. (Owner Castro) Ascarrunz is welcoming from start to finish, making the restaurant feel more like a home."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Yan's
3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd. • 925.284.2228

"A fresh interior and a light hand with most dishes. Good salt-and-pepper preparations, mu shu pork and Szechwan prawns."
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Lafayette in Brief

Police Measure on November Ballot

At their meeting on May 22, the City Council placed a police tax measure on the November ballot. The measure calls for a $64 parcel tax to be levied on each single family residential equivalent for five years. The tax will be used to provide for additional police officers and equipment. Look for comprehensive information in the Fall issue of *Vistas.*

Lafayette Central

Lafayette resident and volunteer Cliff Tong has launched a new website with information on all things Lafayette. The site, **www.lafayettecentral.com**, includes listings of local businesses, reviews, discussion boards, classified ads, news, a master calendar of events, and links to other community organizations.

11th Annual Art & Wine Festival

Saturday and Sunday, September 16–17 in downtown Lafayette. Arts and crafts booths, food, wine, micro-brewed beer, and live music. Call the Chamber of Commerce: 284-7404 or visit **www.lafayettechamber.org** for more information.

Lafayette Reservoir Run

Sunday, October 29. Mark your calendars so you don't miss Northern California's most scenic fun run! 1,500-2,000 participants compete in a 10k, 5k or 2 mile race through the heart of the downtown, around the reservoir and back. Sprinters, walkers, the "stroller brigade" as well as many of Lafayette's top four legged residents share the streets for this festive Sunday morning event. Call the Chamber of Commerce: 284-7404 or visit **www.lafayette chamber.org** for more information.

Magic in Lafayette

Sunday, August 13. A benefit for the Lafayette Town Hall Theater. Your generous donation will help keep the oldest continuously active theater in Contra Costa alive. In return, you'll enjoy sumptuous food from Agave Grill, refreshing beverages and an amazing show featuring four of the most talented magicians ever! Reception at 5pm and Show at 7pm. Donation: $100. For more information, go to **www.thtc.org** or call 283.1557.

Jazz and Rock in the Plaza

Free music in the Lafayette Plaza every Friday night in August & September! In August, you'll be treated to some hot local rock and blues bands while in September it will be cool jazz. All shows start at 6:30pm.

Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop Concert

Friday, July 28. Supported by the Generations in Jazz Foundation, a week-long music workshop for middle and high school students led by professional musicians culminates in a free concert at Stanley Middle School. Come check out these extremely talented kids and their incredibly talented instructors! 3:30-8:00pm.

Correction

In the Winter 2006 edition of *Vistas*, we incorrectly identified Las Trampas clients as providing street sweeping services for the City. Futures Explored, an organization which offers training in both work-related and life skills to adults with mild to moderate developmental disabilities, provides those services in Lafayette.

City Directory

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

Council Members

Ivor Samson	**Mayor**
Carol Federighi	**Vice Mayor**
Mike Anderson	**Council Member**
Carl Anduri	**Council Member**
Don Tatzin	**Council Member**

Messages to **all** Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

General Reception and	**284-1968**
Steven Falk, City Manager	**Fax: 284-3169**
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	**299-3227**
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	**299-3213**
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	**299-3210**

Community Development

Ann Merideth, Director	**299-3218**
Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	**284-1951**
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	**284-1976**
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	**299-3214**
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	**299-3259**

If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.

Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	**299-3216**
	Or 299-3215

Parks, Trails and Recreation **284-2232**

Jennifer Russell, Director	
Senior Services	**284-5050**
Teen Programs	**284-5815**

Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	**911**
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	**284-5010**
Police Business Office:	**283-3680**

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205

Fax	**284-3169**
Address	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210, Lafayette, CA 94549**
Website:	**www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**

E-MAIL: Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:
First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org
Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org

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